

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 18, 2013

To: Public School Superintendents and Principals

From: Dr. Melody Schopp, Secretary of Education

Re: Opportunity to participate in 2013-14 Teacher Effectiveness Pilot Project

South Dakota schools are invited to participate in the South Dakota Teacher Effectiveness Pilot for the 2013-14 school year. Participation in this pilot will build internal capacity to implement comprehensive local teacher evaluation systems that support teachers and student learning, while providing valuable feedback to school leaders across the state. **The deadline to apply is May 17.**

South Dakota's teaching standards are designed to serve as the foundation for professional conversations between teachers and administrators. Done right, evaluation systems built upon these standards will help teachers become more thoughtful and effective practitioners.

The pilot will allow schools an opportunity to experiment with, and inform, the model evaluation system that will be available to all districts in the 2014-15 school year. This system will encompass both qualitative measures of teaching practice based on the new standards (i.e., the Framework for Teaching) and quantitative measures of student growth.

The South Dakota Department of Education has been working with stakeholder groups, and most recently the South Dakota Commission on Teaching and Learning, to develop a model teacher evaluation system that:

1. Complies with state requirements to base teacher evaluations on professional teaching standards as outlined in the Framework for Teaching;
2. Complies with ESEA waiver requirements to include quantitative measures of student growth as one significant measure of teacher effectiveness; and
3. Complies with ESEA waiver requirements to combine measures of professional practice and student growth into a summative effectiveness rating that differentiates teaching performance at various levels.

The model system will be refined through feedback provided by pilot schools. The goal of the pilot project is to learn lessons from pilot schools, identify promising practices, and make any necessary adjustments prior to 2014-15 when the model system will be available statewide and waiver requirements related to teacher effectiveness kick in.

Pilot schools will receive state-paid professional development and in-district support and coaching throughout the 2013-2014 school year. Pilot schools also will participate in a formal research effort, led by the University of South Dakota, designed to assess pilot outcomes and further the state's understanding of effective evaluation practices. This research will look at the process over a three-year period to help understand the longer term impact of the new evaluation system.



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The pilot will include 20 schools representing various school sizes, geographic regions, and administrative structures. If you are interested in joining the pilot, the application can be found at the following link <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JMD2Q7Y>. The deadline to apply is May 17.

If you have questions about the pilot process or application, please contact Carla Leingang at 605.773.4638 or Carla.leingang@state.sd.us.

Thank you for your service and commitment to South Dakota students.